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West Europe Report

(FOUO 60/79)



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WEST EUROPE REPORT

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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

FRANCE

NATION'S PARTIES DEBATE EUROPEAN DEFENSE IN STRASBOURG

Paris VALEURS ACTUELLES in French 1 Oct 79 pp 28-29

[Article by Michel Chamard: "Traps in Strasbourg"]

[Text] "People are going to start thinking we paid to have things happen this way," exclaimed an openly jubilant Christian Poncelet, RPR [Rally for the Republic] senator from the Vosges, in the lobby of Strasbourg's Palais des Nations last week.

Yet the European Democrats of Progress--DEP, a grouping of the RPR and its Irish, Danish, and Scottish allies--had been defeated. They had wanted to prevent debate on the European arms industry, deeming that this subject did not fall within the province of the European Parliament. They obtained only 87 votes out of 410. So the debate took place on Tuesday 25 September. "Yes," Michel Debre told me, "but it did confirm our fears expressed during the European election campaign. The European Parliament is seeking every opportunity to impinge on the powers of the sovereign states."

Former Belgian prime minister Leo Tindemans, leader of the Christian Democrats and advocate of a federal Europe, had explained to me back in July that it was not necessary to change a single comma in the Treaty of Rome to increase the European Parliament's competence. "If the European Council can meet tomorrow and discuss world politics, who can possibly prevent the European Parliament, the product of direct elections, from taking up the same theme and holding a debate on the question?"

The debate on the arms issue did, however, cause some uneasiness within various political groups.

On Monday 24 September, there were three proposed resolutions on the desk of the Parliament's president, Simone Veil. One was from the RPR and its allies, another from French socialists and British Laborites, and the third from French communists. All three resolutions requested that the Parliament declare itself incompetent to debate the question proposed by a British Conservative, Mr Fergusson, and a German Christian Democrat, Mr Von Hassel, namely "the community program relative to the arms industry," in conjunction with NATO.

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A single vote was taken on all three motions. Only 87 members voted in favor of disallowing the debate: the 22 DEP members, 21 French socialists, 19 French communists, and the British Laborites. On the other hand, the liberals, Christian Democrats, German socialists, and Italian communists voted against this disallowance.

Consequently the debate opened at 1700 the next day, 25 September. The discussion shifted very quickly from the arms industry question to the issue of European defense for which the Treaty of Rome makes no provision. Pierre Messmer, speaking for the DEP, and Georges Marchais, for the French communists, both protested. German and French socialists agreed on a compromise: Glinne, the group's Belgian chairman, did not question the usefulness of such a debate, but considered it premature.

All things considered, the Giscardian members were the most uncomfortable. Dissension broke out among them prior to the voting on Monday. Marcel Poniatowski recommended abstention of the 26 Giscardian members, a mixture of liberals and Christian Democrats, in order to avoid falling into the trap. The CDS [Social Democrats Center] indignantly refused. The Giscardians then voted against disallowing the debate. Only Edgar Faure and Andre Rossi voted for disallowance.

A total of some 60 Frenchmen out of 84 thus found themselves united in this affair, with no regard for party labels. A sort of "joint committee" like the one Giscard d'Estaing had hoped for during the election campaign. Paradoxically enough, this committee or group was formed without the participation of the Giscardian members.

"This will cause the Europeanizers to be cautious," a satisfied Michel Debre told me.

Aware of what was happening, Leo Tindemans remarked: "We had the right to discuss the arms industry question. After all, at the Helsinki Conference, Aldo Moro was empowered to speak about disarmament in the name of the Nine. But we were not smart in speaking about defense. It is not within the Parliament's competence."

Chirac's supporters were somewhat vexed by the flashy recovery made by the communists. On 26 September, some 100 newsmen from all countries crowded into the Palais de Nations' small conference room for a press conference by Georges Marchais.

The PCF's secretary general was in great form. He spoke derisively of the "lords and bankers of the Conservative group," denounced the opportunity missed by the socialists to achieve unity at the rank-and-file level during a debate on the "lobster war," and found Parisian accents to speak about the land and the people of France.

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Messmer, however, had set a new trap on the 26th by requesting a vote on a motion declaring the Parliament to be incompetent in defense matters. Rejecting the motion would be tantamount to giving one's implicit support to an extension of the Parliament's powers, in defiance of the Treaty of Rome. The trap never worked, however, because the motion was referred to committee, in other words, buried and forgotten.

"We are still a very small minority," Debre explained. "We can only react by means of such backfires."

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COUNTRY SECTION

FRANCE

PAECHT REPORT ON MILITARY AROUSES INDIGNATION

Paris VALEURS ACTUELLES in French 8 Sep 79 pp 36-38

[Article by Francois d'Orcival: "Dr Paecht's Check-Up"]

[Text] Two armored divisions, 900 armored combat vehicles, 17,000 men. On Wednesday, the chief of state witnessed one phase of the broadest land army exercise ever organized on free soil.

The night before, the parliamentary session in the National Assembly began with this question: "Do we want ill-adapted traditional defense or operational modern defense?" The discussion had to do with the military planning law approved in 1976 for five years, with the parliament being called upon to examine the first three years of its implementation.

The deputy who raised the question was up to that time an unknown. A doctor from Var who dresses discreetly and speaks in a measured tone, he was elected last year for the first time on the UDF [French Democratic Union] ticket and he discovered the parliament by becoming secretary of the defense commission. He is Arthur Paecht, deputy from Toulon, educational director on the Faculty of Medicine in Marseilles. Forty-nine years of age, he has no experience in Paris politics, no professional savoir-faire, but he has a definite taste for research and diagnosis.

In mid-September, the government sent to the parliament a report on the implementation of the planning law. This document could be summarized in two words: "Mission accomplished."

Dr Paecht did not quite share their view. He worked for six months, meeting with military commanders, high officials in the Ministry of Defense and the minister himself, diplomats and armaments industrialists. He even had an audience with the president of the republic in Bregancon (with two other deputies for the region) in August. And, in his dissenting report dated 2 October he concluded coldly: "The parliament has an incomplete, inconsistent and excessively optimistic understanding of the planning law. It is in danger of remaining unaware and misunderstanding the real state of the armed forces, which is very serious in itself."

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In 180 pages crowded with figures and tables, Dr Paecht listed the delays, the lack of synchronization, the decline and the deflection of achievement in relation to the commitment made in 1976. And, he added, in connection with our nuclear forces, "The figures do not reflect the political will expressed."

Such a statement is sacrilege, the more so coming from an elected UDF representative. Even before being distributed to the deputies, his report irritated the Elysee Palace, aroused the anger of the minister of defense, Mr Bourges, and made waves within the parliamentary groups supporting the president. Rumors circulated, there was talk of bumbling and tactlessness, ironical comments. But all this was behind the scenes.

On 2 October, when the parliament resumed its session, Mr Paecht was the first UDF speaker. His group had given him 30 minutes. He spoke immediately after the minister of defense. Then the quarrel erupted in public.

Mr Paecht had not been speaking four minutes when the minister interrupted him. He was to do so 10 times, even reproaching him by name.

"You should learn to handle figures," said Mr Bourges.

"Is this the place to give me lessons?" replied Mr Paecht, who went on to insist that there is a disparity between the official statements and the budget reality.

"A serious charge!" exclaimed Mr Bourges.

"You accuse me of falsifying the figures. Why would I have done so? I have used the documents you gave to me and have reached different conclusions, that is all."

"Quote the figures I gave you," challenged Mr Bourges.

"We are afloat with figures," the deputy responded.

"I am afloat with nothing," answered the minister.

The battle of the figures was in effect the heart of the discussion. The planning law was designed to correct and increase military credit. This was done.

But the law established a rate at which the credit would increase in relation to the budget. The figure for 1982 was to total 20 percent. Meanwhile, Mr Bourges has changed one parameter. He now prefers, over the correlation with the state budget he defended in 1976, one pegged to the gross national business product ("sum of the value added for all branches of production"), which is not known with accuracy until four years after the year in question.

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"A laughable index," said Mr Chevenement, a socialist.

In brief, the 1976 law called for the military budget to come to 18.5 percent of the state budget in 1979; it will remain at 16.9 percent in 1980.

Behind this battle of percentages lies the reality of the credit allocated to the armed branches.

An initial disparity was due to the armed forces treasury "gap" in 1976. It came to 4 billion francs; 1.5 billion had been allocated by the budget collectives, but the branches had to make up the rest from economy. Additionally, they had to bear costs of 600 million in 1978 for the armed intervention in Chad, Zaire, Lebanon and Mauritania. Finally, 400 million in credit allocated for the sixth nuclear submarine was and continues to be drained into the budget for other new naval construction not initially envisaged.

Dr Paecht estimated the franc shortage based on the plan authorizations (future credit commitments) at 8.6 billion francs for the three branches: 5 billion for the air force, 2 for the land army and the balance for the navy.

"It is the plan authorizations which paint the picture of the future," Mr Bourges had told the parliament.

The difficulty in meeting the goals can be seen in several examples.

For example, for the air force: "The maintenance of a fleet of 450 combat aircraft requires the replacement of about 35 planes every year," the Paecht report says (because of aging of the aircraft and accidents, an average of 12 per year). Thirty planes were ordered in 1977, 33 in 1978, and 27 in 1979. Thus the gap, confirmed by engine orders.

The same lag is true of the navy. "In order to maintain the current equipment, 12,000 tons would have to be built each year. Examining the first three years of implementation of the law, the tonnage built each year (excluding strategic submarines) comes to 7,300 tons." Mr Bourges corrected the figure to 8,000 tons. The deficit would still remain 4,000 tons.

And this while the increase in weapons production credit is greater for the classic forces than for nuclear weapons: 11.8 percent more for nuclear, in 1980, as compared to 22.7 percent for classic. "High officials in our defense system have told us that in 1981 and 1982 nuclear expenditures would decrease, the report says. "I don't see how one can say that," Mr Giscard d'Estaing replied drily on Wednesday.

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Nonetheless, Dr Paecht's comment was as follows: "The M4 nuclear missile program (multiple warhead) shows indisputable progress in relation to the earlier system: it is a technological leap. We will have the M4 in 1985. But the 1985 M4 will not be comparable to the American weapons which will come out at that same time. Where we are best situated, we are matching what the Americans did 10 years ago."

"Let us have a dynamic policy in the nuclear weapons sector," proposes Dr Paecht. He says:

"Concerning military problems, it is necessary to reason in terms of operational efficiency. Too frequently we see economic, financial, social and often even corporatist concerns prevail over the concept of defense. It must be realized that in the rapid and even lightning-like movement of the military sector, a lag or stagnation can lead to our destruction."

Mr Bourges sees neither a lag nor stagnation. He maintains:

"The 1980 budget is the fifth I have proposed. For me it is a fifth source of satisfaction."

General Bigeard drew laughter when he made this comment to him Tuesday:

"Bravo, Mr Minister! It is really good of you to reassure us."

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COUNTRY SECTION

FRANCE

POLICE UNION PRESIDENT INTERVIEWED

Paris PARIS MATCH in French 19 Oct 79 p 51

[Interview of Henri Buch, president of the Autonomous Federation of Police Unions by Florence Portes: "Tell Us, Henri Buch"; date and place not given]

[Text] [Question] How are the police doing in 1979?

[Answer] We have several reasons to be angry. For years now, our most essential demands have not been met, and the 1980 austerity budget for the national police does not hold forth much hope that we will be able to protect the people more effectively. Besides, we have found that the gendarmery budget was favored. It is clear to us that a police force under military law that is silent and submissive is becoming increasingly privileged, to the detriment of a civilian police force.

[Question] What are your main grievances?

[Answer] The gradual touch-up reform imposed by Poniowski in 1976-77 has only worsened the rivalries between policemen and increased divisions within the police force. We find that the officer corps has been set adrift legally and functionally. The advancement of the corps in general has gone from a critical to an alarming condition. The investigators are at the end of their rope. The administrators are watching a whole series of measures being taken and they are being left out. All the inspectors are beginning to grumble, and rightly so. Everything has been going against what we want: a modern, democratic police force serving everyone.

[Question] I suppose you have talked to your cabinet minister, Christian Bonnet, about it?

[Answer] Of course we have had the opportunity to meet with the minister of the interior and pass on to him all our demands, but my impression is that despite his obvious good will he does not have the last word and cannot provide the national police with either the means to improve the security of the population or the means to meet the most urgent needs of the staff that he heads.

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[Question] Who does have the last word?

[Answer] Logically, he would. But we wonder, Is it Matignon or the Elysee?

[Question] What is the status of the "police forces' war"?

[Answer] It has always existed. It will continue as long as they keep forming those anti-everything brigades that are really anti-nothing and only reduce efficiency in the long run.

[Question] Why do you think Mesrine hasn't been arrested yet?

[Answer] He's been made into a comic-strip hero until somebody decides it's to his advantage to put a stop to Mesrine's activities.

[Question] Do you mean they could arrest him if they wanted to? You've got to be kidding!

[Answer] Ask the minister of the interior or the minister of justice.

[Question] The recent changes at the top of the Paris police have not been to everyone's taste. How do you feel about it?

[Answer] After a series of incidents the minister of the Interior may have decided to shape things up and for once to change the unwritten rule that at the firemen's ball the same people always dance and the flunkies drink. But we are keeping a close watch on the results of these changes, because it may be that they are only one of the effects of the power struggle between the president of the Republic and the mayor of Paris.

[Question] Will you continue to fight the law allowing fines to be collected on the spot?

[Answer] We have always shown our hostility to seeing policemen being changed into schoolmasters, and our position has met with wide agreement in public opinion. Now it is up to the members of Parliament to shoulder their responsibilities.

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COUNTRY SECTION

FRANCE

INSIDE VIEW OF PROBLEMS OF COMMUNIST PUBLISHER NOTED

Paris L'EXPANSION in French 19 Oct 79 pp 37, 39

[Text] The LDC [Livre Club Diderot-Diderot Book Club], specializing in the sale of countless books by [Louis] Aragon, is one of the business affairs that feeds the coffers of the PCF. Lean Larede and Jean-Claude Blanchet tell in their book how for 6 years they used their energy as communist militants and their enthusiasm as dynamic young go-getters while working for the LCD.

The incompetence of the top men, personal bickering, double bookkeeping, exploitation of the salaried staff and the short shrift given the trade-unionists, all the ingredients of a backward business, are attributable to the LCD. And, as a "bonus," there was always, in the background the stifling atmosphere of the PCF. The picture is so dismal and the accusations so strong that one can hardly believe that the authors, fired by the LCD in 1978 for failure to conform, still have their PCF [membership] cards. Out-and-out anticommunists could not have done better. As an attempt to demythologize, this book reminds one of [the book] RUE DU PROLETAIRE ROUGE [Street of the Red Proletarian] by Jean and Nina Kehayen; unfortunately, it has a less flowing style and less color in the telling. Read it, nonetheless, if only to learn a little more about the hidden aspects of the PCF. (This book has 316 pages, costs 45 francs and is published by Fayard.)

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COUNTRY SECTION

FRANCE

ELEMENTS OF MARITIME STRATEGY OUTLINED

Paris STRATEGIQUE in French 3-79 pp 7-28

[Article by RAdm Olivier Sevaistre: "Elements for a Maritime Strategy"]

[Text] Maritime Strategy

Everybody uses the term strategy and we no longer really know what exactly it means. For civilians and for the military, this generally involves a rationalization of action in a conflict among several expressions of will and determination. The civilian aspect against its components, the military aspect against the enemy--both of them indeed adopt a series of coordinated decisions deriving from each other so as to attain an objective which itself is selected as a function of a system of values, a policy.

The company manager, who has charted a strategy for himself, implements it when he thinks the time is right in a context which he knows well or which he thinks he knows well. The military man applies his strategy as of a certain moment at which he is no longer in control, under circumstances which he cannot determine in advance. No tricks can remove this difference--neither those strategic models which are a simplification of possible or probably mechanisms of triggering events, nor the scenarios which are working assumptions on the conditions for triggering those mechanisms. Models and scenarios are very useful in testing decision-making systems and setting up exercises in which the command organization is put to the test--but they cannot have any other purposes. The military man thus is confronted with a world of unknowns. He normally knows only "potential" enemies. In peacetime, he has to draft a strategic doctrine. He must have a grouping of basic principles and procedures which will guide his action the day a crisis or a war breaks out or at least he must have a realistic commitment of his forces.

The government's military policy consists in spelling out the objectives which it intends to assign to its forces, in peace or war, in adopting the strategic doctrine which will guide their possible action, and in providing the necessary resources. Military strategy will then be the conduct of war in the military domain. Maritime strategy, within military

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strategy, confirms the conduct of operations in maritime space; in other words, the definition of missions and tasks in this space, the constitution of forces assigned to them, their evolution in the course of operations, and the management of the potential. Maritime tactics is the art of leading the forces charged with operations in maritime space. While operations are generally conducted from land, the forces involved here are led on the sea by authorities on the spot where the action is.

Maritime Space

Strategic Analysis of Maritime Environment

Maritime strategy is rather a latecomer in military thinking. It is not sure that it has really won its rightful place in certain countries with a strong continental outlook, such as France. The sailor, an outsider, is an unknown. The military danger has come from the East far too often. We have forgotten what we lost in maritime wars. The specialists have their share of responsibility for this since they often had violent quarrels among each other, especially in the case of the Anglo-Saxons, although this had profound repercussions in France.

Different tendencies have always manifested themselves. First of all there are those who think in terms of materiel, a natural tendency in the sailor and aviator; for them, the tool, the ship or the aircraft, creates the fighting unit, ahead of the men who use it¹. After the episode of the "Young School" of Admiral Aube, who believed that he could solve everything with just a few torpedo-boats and coastguard vessels, all navies were dominated until 1939 by gun-boats; after that they were dominated by naval aviators. Today, the submariners are in the lead. Among the all-out supporters of the preeminence of materiel, we might also mention aviators such as Trenchard and Mitchell and certain exclusive supporters of nuclear weapons. Now, while materiel is extremely important, it does not solve all strategic problems; it was never anything more than a means and any exclusive system is bad in an area that is wide open and that demands a highly varied panoply.

Other maritime strategies are based on history and the father of the historical school is Mahan, followed by disciples such as the Britons Colomb, Corbett, and Roskill, and the French Darrieus, Daveluy, and Castex. This school seeks in the past that which may appear in terms of constant principles and valid lessons for the future; it tries to single out that which was only occasional and transitory and it separates it from that which may be permanent. Sensitive to the various forms of wartime action and war itself, to its political and legal aspects, it finds it difficult to foresee the changes caused by a revolutionary weapons system, such as the nuclear weapons system, for example².

In the wake of the historians, we have the geographers, with the men of geopolitics and geostrategy in the first line. Discredited by the Nazi

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excesses, the latter is nevertheless a form of analysis which retains its value if it manages to avoid assigning an almost mythical importance to certain places or notions such as the "heartland" of Mackinder³. Another, more moderate and more pragmatic school of geography, inspired by Frenchmen such as Vidal-Lablache and Brunhes, leads us to Castex. While the school of geostrategy quite correctly accentuates the internal structure of states and their relative positions, the moderate geographers study the influence of the physical framework upon the action of military forces in order to derive rules of conduct for operations from that.

Geographers and historians are persuaded to make their considerations converge upon the economy. Mahan emphasized the importance of maritime trade. Castex prepared a synthesis of several currents, which is probably due to his own genius. The economists emphasize the phenomena of blockades but they have a tendency to allow the economic factors to take their course with the very laudable intention of preventing human losses. These phenomena unfortunately have very slow effects. A dangerous military activity might result from that and it might leave the enemy the leisure to reverse the situation by an action that is all the more abrupt since he knows that time is against him.

Maritime strategy thus gladly gets out of the strictly military domain. Geography likewise remains an incomparable tool in strategic analysis which enables us to put everything in its place and to perform the synthesis. Castex found that "geography intervenes in varying degrees, at varying stages, on varying scales. For small and medium units, it is the 'terrain' whose influence hardly goes beyond the tactical domain. For the man who is in charge of operations in a certain theater, this is already a much vaster geography to handle. Finally, when we want to come up with a general situation estimate of the peoples on the planet, from many different viewpoints, we must envisage what is called 'grand geography,' European, oceanic, and even world geography, because it is the only one that enables us to judge how certain groupings are put together and what the position deriving from that happens to be regarding the various strategies involved, not only in terms of military, land, maritime, and air strategies as such, but also in terms of political strategy, economic strategy, moral strategy, etc."⁴.

France is only too familiar with the point Castex is trying to make. Starting with the terrain compartment where he was born in order then to consider the national "pressure," he often finds it difficult to go further and to examine the world at large. But, in our time, problems become worldwide; France runs the risk of having a shortage of domestic fuel because there happens to be a revolution in Iran. I thus propose to examine maritime strategy on a worldwide scale with the sea constituting an environment, such as we shall see, one of the essential links between most of the nations.

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Geostrategic Analysis

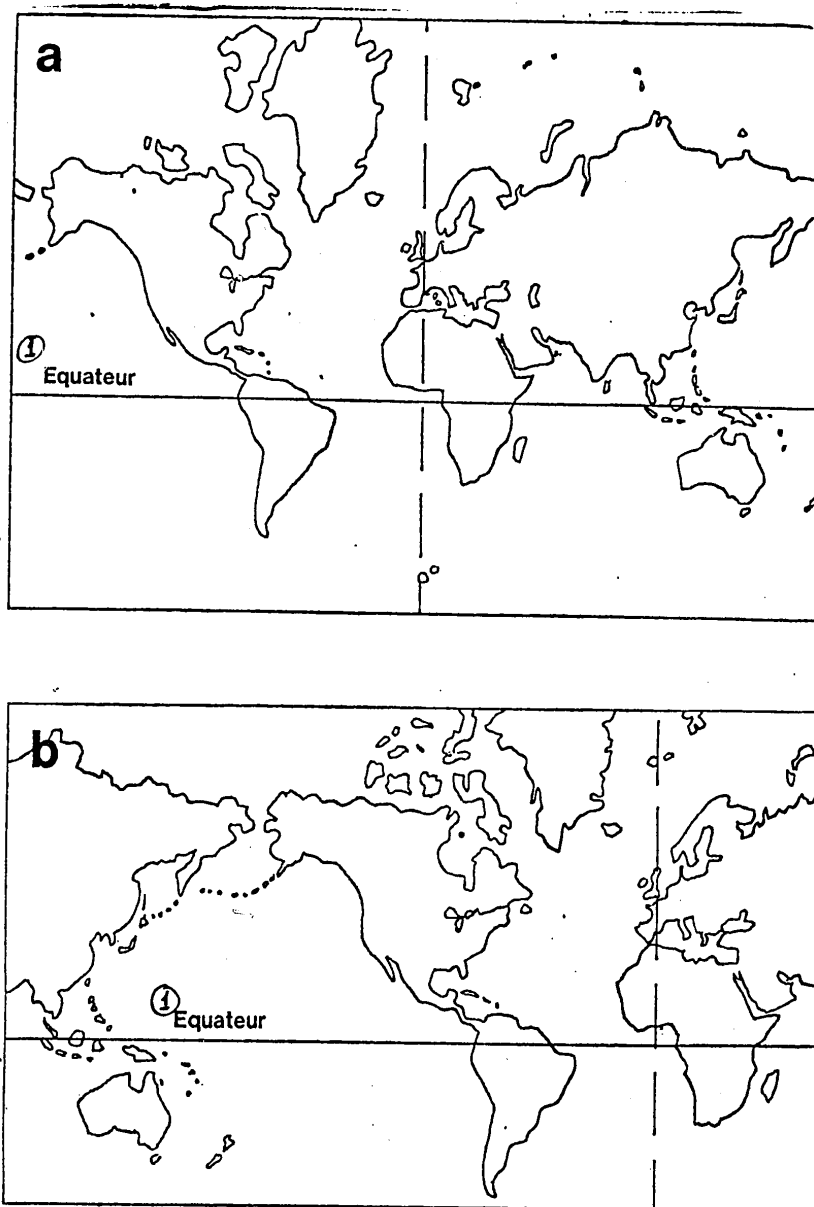
An analysis of the international situation first of all requires a critique of the instruments of representing and illustrating the earth. The Mercator projection puts the poles somewhere in infinity and our planispheres have accustomed us to look upon our planet as a cylinder. The manner in which that cylinder is cut up and flattened out is in itself deceptive; it drops an ocean (Figure 1a) or it gives another one an exaggerated place (Figure 1b). We must therefore use the appropriate maps without forgetting the type of distortion which each of them brings us. A polar projection is particularly suitable for our purpose here because most of the dry land is in the Northern Hemisphere (Figure 2).

Regardless of the system used, we find that the earth is a blue-water planet: Seventy-one percent of its surface are covered by the ocean. The twenty-nine percent of dryland are surrounded by water. MacKinder's "World Island" made up of Eurasia and Africa, is a bloc cut by two maritime penetration areas, the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, which join. The Americas, two big islands linked by an umbilical cord, constitute a barrier from the 55th parallel South all the way to the Arctic polar regions. The latter links North America and Eurasia through an area that cannot be negotiated on the surface and transformed two big oceans into dead-end streets. But the latter communicate with a third one through a ring-shaped maritime area which isolates the Antarctic Continent. The rest of the world is made up of island groups the most remarkable among which is made up of the countless islands of Southeast Asia, at once a bridge between the continent and the last of the big islands, Australia, and a barrier between the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean.

The world island does not contain any heartland whose possession supposedly guarantees domination of the entire continental space and, consequently, of the world. It is too vast to be occupied by a single nation. Two countries occupy the major portion of its surface but the Soviet Union, the first country in the world in terms of the length of its coastlines (24,000 nautical miles) can hardly use them because they are almost all located in Arctic space. China, the tenth country in terms of the length of its coastlines, is 104th by virtue of the ratio between this length and its total surface⁵. These two nations therefore by nature are continental powers accustomed to living by themselves, with immense land frontiers whose frailty has always given them a very strong feeling of insecurity. Outside the world islands, the maritime powers use the sea for a policy which covers the globe, benefitting from the security which they derive from the absence of land frontiers. The principal power among these maritime powers, the United States, together with Canada occupies an island having the dimensions of a continent.

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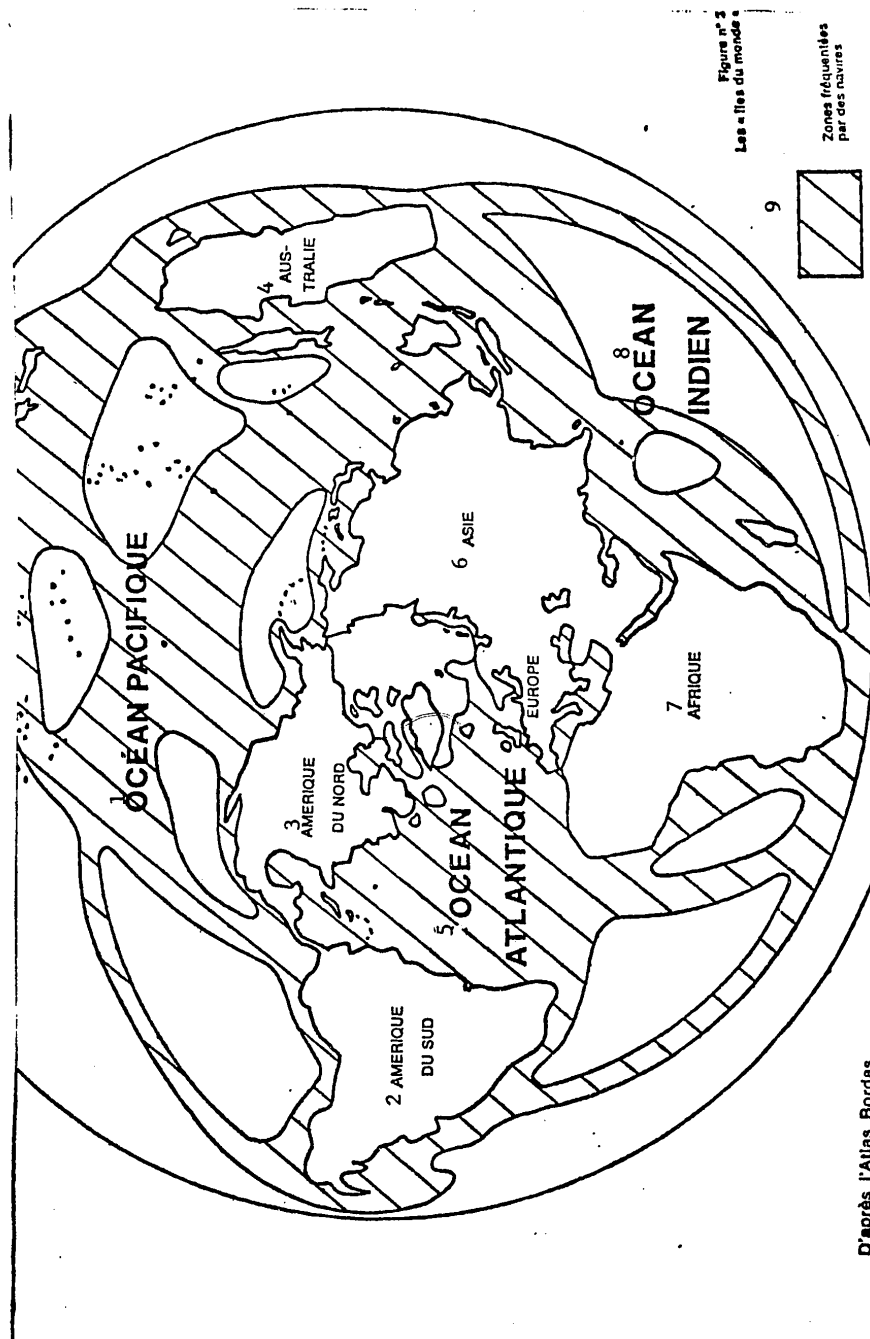
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[Figure 1] From "Sea Power" by E. B. Potter and Chester W. Nimitz. Key: 1--equator.

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[Figure 2] The "World Islands." Key: 1--Pacific Ocean; 2--South America; 3--North America; 4--Australia; 5--Atlantic Ocean; 6--Asia; 7--Africa; 8--Indian Ocean; 9--areas frequented by ships. From Bordas Atlas.

The rest of Eurasia is divided up among numerous states, a considerable number of whom occupy peninsulas or the coastal edge of the world islands. They form what Spykman calls the "rimland" and they are the stakes in the rivalry among the big continental powers and the maritime power. The former can use them as base for an offensive designed to wrest use of the sea from the latter and the latter can use them as bridgeheads for conquering continental space. Islands and island groups thus constitute as many platforms for either side. The most uncomfortable situation is the situation of countries having both a continental facade and a maritime facade. They are transformed into "islands" if they have nuclear weapons which "santuarize" their territory, thus reducing their strategic problem to facts close to those of the island powers. These nuclear arms block major conflicts and aggressiveness between nations is shifted into the area of indirect strategies where oceans are a preferred place.

Between these two extremes, the strictly continental powers, on the one hand, and the strictly maritime powers, on the other hand, there are highly diversified situations. Each country is dominant either in a maritime or a continental manner. A fundamental dissymmetry will always characterize these two types of nations. If we look at conventional armament, the continental nation would have to be invaded in order to be defeated and one can hardly reach it by sea, except with nuclear weapons systems. By acquiring a certain maritime capacity, it can on the other hand weaken or ruin the powers that depend on the sea for their economic or political life.

Strategic Zones and Spaces

On a worldwide scale, zones having strategic unity are those involving the three major oceans (Figure 3). Two others, the polar spaces, are practically neutralized by their weather conditions and, as far as the Antarctic is concerned, by its geographic location and international agreement.

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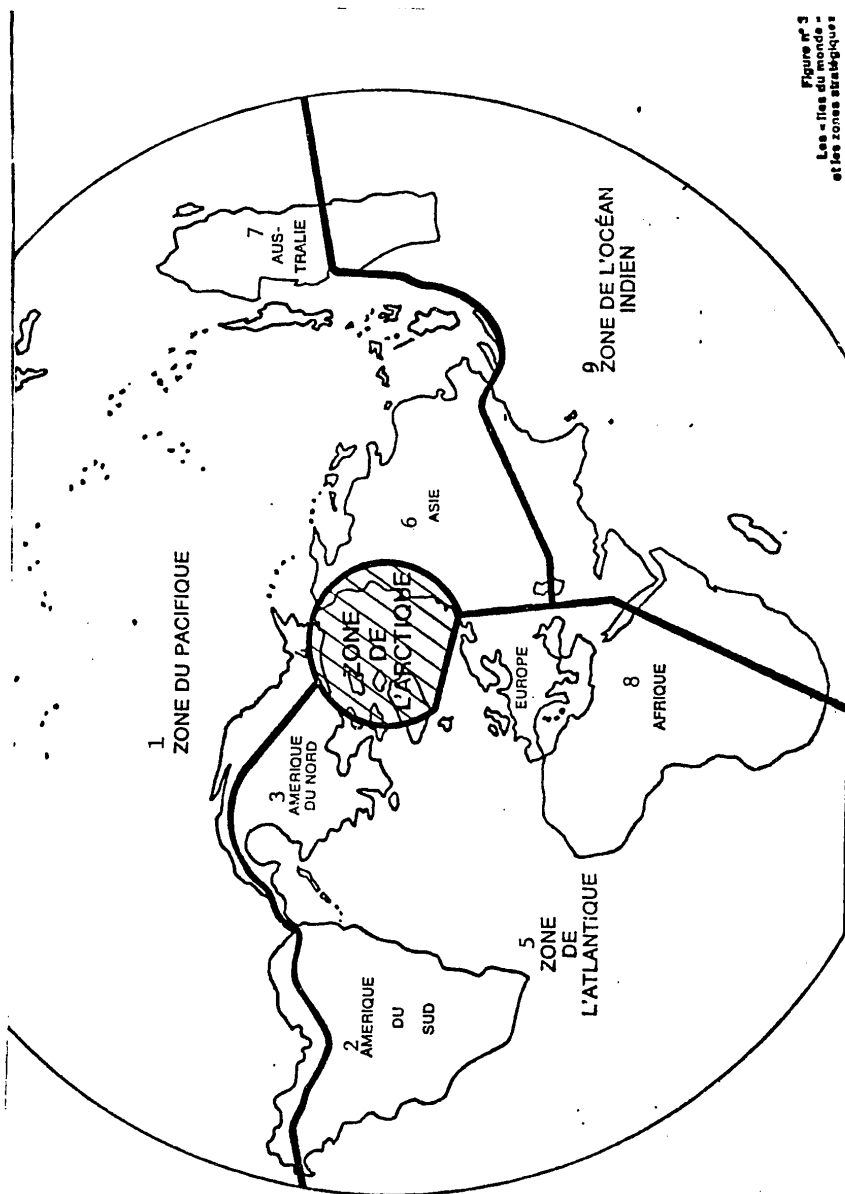


Figure n° 3
Les îles du monde
et les zones stratégiques

[Figure 3] The "world islands" and strategic zones. Key: 1--Pacific zone; 2--South America; 3--North America; 4--Arctic zone; 5--Atlantic zone; 6--Asia; 7--Australia; 8--Africa; 9--Indian Ocean zone.

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Like any subdivision, this one is obviously arbitrary. It is however based on profound experience. The Soviet Union, like the old tsarist empire, is squeezed between the European and Atlantic front and an Far Eastern front belonging to the world of the Pacific. It is pushing toward warm-water areas, in other words, toward Indian Ocean, via Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Ever since it attained its "manifest destiny," the United States has been divided among the two major oceans. The United States is looking toward the West, toward China, toward Japan, and toward Southeast Asia; but it is also looking to the East, toward Europe and Africa. The Indian Ocean, a strategic vacuum from 1814 until 1941, is regaining its position due to the ambitions of some of its riparian countries and the intervention of the big powers. Australia, polarized until now by the Pacific, today realizes that it also has a facade toward the West and interest in an ocean which it had just about neglected⁶.

These three strategic zones all at once have a land space and a maritime space. The land space--the continents--is the space of the limited horizons and natural obstacles. Here vehicles have a low unit transport capacity. While the tactical mobility of ground forces is excellent, their strategic mobility remains relatively feeble in spite of air transport whose capacities however are limited. But the land is the normal place for the activities of man; here he had his home, his family, and the structures of his society. National territory materializes the sovereignty of a state. Without that, it would disappear along with its reason for existence which is to assure the wellbeing of the people living there. The tangible mark of any defeat, regardless of its origin, is always partial or total occupation. On land space, war always involves the risk of being total because it directly threatens the existence of nations.

Maritime space marks a "sharp dividing line" for the landlubber. It is also a space for communication. In spite of recent attempts, its appropriation always remains limited and relative and this is so only by virtue of the tremendous resources which each nation would have to utilize in order to make sure that its presumed rights are being respected. But the sea has no real frontiers apart from the coastline, except for some special cases. A line on a maritime chart would never have the same significance as a line following a river or a crest line. It will remain an international space, a "piece of common property," at least as regards the free movement of ships and aircraft. The nations moreover would have "interest" on the sea some of which might be "vital" to the extent that they determine the nation's domestic activity. They will never have the character of an essential possession as represented by national soil.

To a certain degree, this nonessential nature means that, in maritime space, military adventurism entails less risks for the nation engaging in it than similar nations on land. War on the sea or from the sea may remain limited. A nation can operate far from its own home territory, in a highly localized manner, utilizing maritime space and without jeopardizing

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its own existence. Francis Bacon pointed that out already in the 16th century and this is roughly the idea developed by Liddell Hart in his "British way in warfare." It also clarifies the withdrawal of the Americans to island position after their failure in Vietnam.

Ever since the Wright brothers took off from the dune at Kittyhawk, there has been a third strategic space, called air space. But there is no lack of ambiguity here: It does not exist for itself and by itself except to the extent that the actions conducted there are aimed at intervening in the surface, land or maritime battles. The latter thus, on the one hand, concerns the strategic air offensive, designed to destroy the enemy's population, economic, and industrial potential and, on the other hand, air defense whose purpose is to oppose the enemy's strategic air offensive. Any other form of air action, starting with the drive for air superiority, has the direct purpose of producing an effect on the surface battle and thus pursues the same strategic goal as it does. This air action thus is a part of the strategy conducted in land or maritime space.

There is probably a fourth strategic space: That is space, properly speaking, which has become the preferred place for strategic offensive and that term here is understood in the meaning given to strategic air offensive. It is however being used for other military purposes, tied to the surface battle, with the employment of navigation, observation, or communications satellites. The actions aimed at destroying those satellites thus are directly tied to land strategy or maritime strategy. Each strategy, at any rate, normally corresponds to an overall strategy which in turn is tied to a general strategy. There are thus important interactions between the strategies. One can hit land from the sea and one can hit targets on the sea from land. The aircraft and the missile furnish abundant means of reciprocal action.

Military Forces in Maritime Space

The Maritime Power

In what he calls the maritime power of a state, Admiral Gorchkov⁷ includes not only the military forces which that nation can deploy in maritime space but its entire economic, industrial, and political potential, the merchant marine, the fishing fleet, scientific vessels, the industry supporting them, and even the maritime traditions of all or a portion of the population. This is an old French idea⁸. On the ocean, much more so than on land, it is difficult, in peace and in war, to separate that which is of interest, respectively, to the civilian and to the military leader. Both of them very often side by side play active roles by risking their lives together in the same operation.

For once more Cartesian than we, the Anglo-Saxons reserve the term of maritime power (seapower) for what is specifically military here. It is certain, that starting from a certain level of crisis or conflict, seapower

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thus construed becomes preponderant and determines the other actions that can be carried out in maritime space. The important thing then is to find out what the objectives are that one could assign to those forces⁹.

We are not talking here about the exhaustive analysis of the riches and interests which a nation may have on the sea or in the sea; there is a book which did that job in a remarkable fashion¹⁰. Let us simply recall, together with Admiral Castex, that "the sea is first of all a frontier, an end to the land. An area of nourishment, a highway that connects more than separates the continents, the most remote regions, and the most diverse parts of the world"¹¹. Mahan saw the sea as "the grand means of communication of nature" or as "a common vastness." In 1975, Dr Schlesinger, the then defense secretary, expressed himself in an identical manner: "The seas were and remain--in spite of the revolution now in progress in air transport--the grand highway on which vast quantities of goods must move in peace and war"¹². Sir Walter Raleigh said in the 16th century: "He who commands the sea, controls trade; he who controls trade, has the wealth of the world and consequently the world itself." While the French are not as good merchants as the Anglo-Saxons, this is not so much a matter of religion but of a fact that the spirit of business and commercial adventure, which inspired our old maritime cities under the Old Regime, was ruined by the seven years' war and the Continental Blockade. It is true freedom of the seas that the Third World is now trying to impose a new worldwide economic order.

In spite of his merits, Mahan has bequeathed to us a rather vicious expression, what he calls the "maritime route" [sealane]. Vessels sail on the same courses because their captains know how to read a maritime chart and use a sextant. This leads to the formation, in certain places, of what sailors call a "rail" or, in other words, many vessels are sailing on neighboring courses. These itineraries however are only a vast area of water which one can neither destroy nor totally interdict, except in some cases. One must protect, not this vast expanse of water itself, which would make no sense, but the vessels that sail in it, and that is something entirely different. An undertaking, which would appear disproportionate when we look at the distances that must be protected, then becomes possible by means of several devices permitting economy of means of protection. The oldest is the convoy system which is periodically rediscovered, as the British did with their sad experience in 1917 after the failure of the "patrolled lanes." Like any device, the system has its price and it is estimated that the output loss, which it causes as far as the means of transportation are concerned, comes to 30 percent. Nevertheless, it seems preferable to the massacre of isolated cargo vessels.

Other reasons however are involved in persuading nations to continue to maintain large military units capable of operating in maritime areas; in particular this includes everything that makes it possible to operate from the sea toward the land. The aircraft and the missile considerably increased the ways of striking far into the interior. But above all the sea

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makes it possible to strike enemy territory far from your own territory. This is what the Americans call the "projection" of sea power upon the land. Deriving from this notion of using the sea to disperse strategic nuclear armaments, no point on the globe is henceforth safe from submarine missiles. The projection of seapower however can assume infinitely less brutal forms which may be of interest to the political game in peacetime. We will come back to that subject.

This employment of forces presupposes tremendous strategic mobility. In this area, the main difficulty resides in the need for having an industrial base where vessels and military aircraft, which are complicated and fragile systems, can come back periodically. Prior to 1939, all of the big nations thought that they had solved this problem through networks of bases scattered throughout the world. This network proved to be militarily doubtful and the base, such as the one at Singapore, often became a target rather than a support facility. Above all, it has become politically impossible or too precarious to justify huge infrastructure expenditures. Far from the home country, however, one can station sufficiently large forces and for rather long periods of time due to a certain number of devices, such as the aircraft carrier, which is a mobile air base, mobile logistic support, resupply at sea or in flight. This does not prevent the search for support bases or facilities which are not indispensable in themselves but which confer flexibility and which facilitate the existence of forces by providing a certain elementary logistic support, fresh rations, and fuel, for example, or by giving the personnel some comforts, even if that only means the possibility of going ashore from time to time after a long stay at sea. The inconvenience of forces concentrated on floating bases resides in their slow travelling speed; this inconvenience can sometimes be remedied by stationing forces in advance in areas containing political hot spots. On the other hand, their endurance capacity is rather considerable and one might say that these forces are complementary to air strike forces. The speed of movement of the latter is very vast but they run the risk of encountering difficulties in getting overflight authorization (except over the sea) and they have less "staying power."

The last objective consists in protecting the exploitation of the sea. In the old days, that was confined to fishing which continues to be quite important, particularly for the countries of the Third World who lack proteins. Today, this also involves offshore oil and polymetallic nodules. The marine environment is a big unknown as the 20th century draws to an end. It may perhaps hold vast wealth. But, between Grotius, who based freedom of the seas partly on the fact that their resources were inexhaustible, and Selden, who rejected that argument, it seems that our time has proved the latter to be right¹³. In exploiting the resources of the sea, there cannot be total freedom; instead, we need international regulations or appropriations.

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Control of the Sea

In peacetime, everybody uses the sea just about freely, within limits fixed by international accords. In wartime, the ratio of forces enters the picture. The side that can impose its will upon the sea may interdict use of the sea to its adversary and may reserve itself all or a portion of the four objectives listed above. However, one does not occupy the sea the way one occupies land. On the sea, there is no front line; the enemy can always be everywhere and come from any direction. Mobile by essence, maritime forces are distributed over a vast area whose measure is not distance but surface. The moment one wishes to operate on the sea, and realizes that the means one has are diluted over considerable areas as compared to the distances covered, even by aircraft, and as compared to the range of detection equipment and weapons.

Conversely, the danger which one faces on the sea, due to the fact that the enemy is there, is of variable intention and is a function of the distance from the place where one operates as compared to one's bases. As we move further away, our resources are scattered over ever larger surfaces. The roundtrip travel time is increased and that further reduces the time available at the place of action. The operational utilization time of any weapons system is always limited; that applies even to the nuclear-powered submarines, if only because of the endurance of the personnel. Maritime space can thus be divided into zones of greater or lesser attack probability. One can thus understand the importance of information enabling us to locate targets with precision or any information facilitating the search by restricting the search area the study of obligatory passages, of focal zones of maritime traffic, ranging from anything that has to do with the habits or restrictions of the environment, all the way to activities in the zone of operations, weather, geography, or any other factor.

The notion of occupying the sea, which makes no sense, has been replaced with the notion of control of the sea. It simply means that the side that has it, can use the sea to its own benefit, for any suitable uses, and that side can prevent the enemy from using the sea. The latter will then challenge that control and the Anglo-Saxons call this challenge "sea denial." Consequently, the side that has control of the sea, instead of enjoying it very calmly, may find itself facing certain threats and may suffer certain losses. That side may even have to renounce the use of portions of the zone of operations where it suffers the most severe losses because it feels that these losses are no longer supportable, that its means are technically ineffective or numerically insufficient. As Castex put it, mastery of the sea is always "incomplete, relative, imperfect, local, and temporary."

A nation may simultaneously adopt both of these strategies, it may exercise control of the sea in one area and it may challenge its adversary in another area. Such situations are not rare in history; while maintaining

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control of the Pacific, the Americans challenged the control exercised by the Japanese, in the China Sea, through violent submarine warfare whose success was remarkable and much greater than what Doenitz--who lost his submarine war--was able to accomplish. One may also find other situations where, in certain zones, control of the sea is not gained by anybody; each side takes its chances there and that can lead to meeting engagements between maritime forces. A zone may also present such dangers for both adversaries that neither will wish to commit himself there and that of course neutralizes the particular zone. In both cases, the effect is often produced by modern means which can be used from land and over the sea, particularly, aviation, and that situation lasts so long as these means exist in sufficient numbers. This sort of thing is frequent in narrow oceans where the events of the land on the sea is particularly easy to produce.

We are far from the time when Mahan considered an organized force to be the foundation for control of the sea. The war of battleship squadrons reached its high point at Jutland, in 1916. During World War II, the aircraft carrier displaced the battleship as the "capital ship" forming the backbone of that organized force. Regardless of what the instrument may be, the concept remains the same: The concept of a "hard core" which one must destroy in order to win freedom of action for oneself on the sea. Some theoreticians even went so far as to claim that this destruction was not necessary: The mere existence of a squadron would suffice to force the enemy squadron--in theory or in numbers and quality--to remain in port in order to escape destruction while in turn playing its role by tying down large forces in front of it which might be better used elsewhere. This concept of the "fleet in being" may of course be debated because a fleet immobilized in its bases is in itself an unused potential.

After the war, the disappearance of an enemy afloat reduced the organized forces only to the American "striking fleets" which essentially are tools for projection of seapower upon the land. In practice, the diversity of threats makes it necessary to exercise control of the sea with widely diverse means which are assembled to assure as effective protection of possible for interests or forces. The tools of control of the sea must be adapted to the forms in which it is challenged. Thus the 1979 British white paper lists equipment programs by types of defensive operations, such as antisubmarine warfare, antisurface ship warfare, maritime air warfare, and mine warfare. These programs are tailored to a given threat, such as submarines, surface vessels, aircraft, and mines. In fact, these operations would be conducted more or less simultaneously, necessitating a certain polyvalence of forces on the sea which, generally, a dominant that varies according to the place and the moment. They must however not cause us to forget the reasons for control of the sea.

The challenger may pursue several objectives. The most evident is a radical challenge aimed at depriving the adversary of the use of the sea

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by the most rapid means. Here in particular it is important to create a real blockade in order to cause a supply crisis in the camp of the adversary by cutting his maritime transport line. A second objective is the same, but more long-range, and seeks the attrition of the means of transportation. In this tonnage war, the loss of any vessel, empty or full, has the same value, regardless of the place where it is sunk. This was practiced by Doenitz when, in 1943, he had to withdraw his submarines from the North Atlantic. The last objective is less ambitious and consists in immobilizing, at relatively low cost, the considerable resources which the adversary is obliged to put in place in order to protect important interests wherever they may be threatened. In 1943, 212 German submarines forced the British and the Canadians to assign 457 escort vessels and 507 aircraft to ASW missions, not to mention the American forces¹⁴. At least temporarily, the British had to reinforce the Coastal Command to the detriment of the bombing raids on Germany.

In case of a clash, the commanders might find themselves facing cruel dilemmas. Is it better to destroy the instrument for control of the sea or that which it protects, the escort vessel or the ship escorted? Is it better to destroy, at any price, the instrument of challenge which one has detected or is it better not to risk the existence of that which one wishes to protect and above all to guarantee the sacrosanct mission of any escort vessel: "The safe and timely arrival of the convoy?"¹⁵ This is a very old dispute which may seem to be tactically minor but which boils down to the same ultimate purposes as the maritime strategy which everybody must be familiar with. The necessary offensive spirit must not cause us to forget the basic purpose of the mission and that basic purpose springs from reasons for which maritime forces exist in the first place. Quite often, control of the sea will result from two simultaneous attritions, one prevailing over the other. The enemy's military means are always a target of choice and we would be very wrong not to go after them everytime we can. But the real purpose of any action in maritime space is to weaken or destroy the enemy's seapower, understood here in the broadest sense.

The submarine is the dream instrument for the challenger in seeking to gain control of the sea and it has now become the means making it possible to dissimulate strategic missiles in maritime space. Right now, the powers that have SSBNs are stationing them without worrying about control exercised on the surface, except for that in special zones. One might ask oneself whether that will always be the case. There is presently nothing that would enable us to anticipate any change. A technological breakthrough could abruptly change the situation and make it necessary to have control of zones where strategic submarines are on station.

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Maritime Forces--Direct Instrument of Political Power

In wartime, maritime strategy is one of the components of military strategy. In peacetime, the sea offers the political power certain possibilities for the employment of maritime forces which place them directly in its service.

In view of the international status of maritime space, one can say first of all that it lends itself particularly well to the functions assigned to the French military forces by the 1976 law on military programs. By virtue of their movements, maritime forces express their existence "with his concrete and permanent testimony of the national will" and which is also "one of the factors by which the country can exert influence on the international scene." These movements, which are observed abroad, constitute "their maneuver, regardless of whether this involves an alert, an increase in power, as well as changes in movements or deployments."

This maneuver "confers special significance to diplomatic actions" and "their commitment marks the determination not to bow to the adversary."

Maritime space permits a gradation in the employment of forces, ranging from exerting simple influence all the way to the massive destruction of the enemy, passing through coercion and limited attack. The risks are often less on the sea or via the sea than with other means. Recently, the remarkable withdrawal of the French contingent from FINUL by amphibious means avoided delicate land travel. One can apply the remark made by Soviet Admiral Kosatonov-Navitsev to many situations: "The purpose of the recent increase in the power of Soviet naval forces in the Mediterranean is not wartime combat with the Sixth United States Fleet but support of Soviet political objectives at a much lower risk level in an environment that is much less marked than a total confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union."

This line of argument was developed in a rather strange and little-known little book¹⁶. One may summarize it by saying that the ocean favors certain forms of operation. It is a "field of contention" open to all. Warships can assemble there and cruise for long periods of time while waiting for the moment that will be politically or militarily favorable for their intervention¹⁷. So long as they are on the high seas, they are not committed but they already constitute a form of pressure. An isolated vessel can take the temperature before one ventures further. Forces, even large ones, which penetrate territorial waters, are politically and above all militarily less committed than a company of infantry that crosses a border or an aircraft that violates air space. If things turn out badly, it is easier to disengage via the sea. Moreover, many remote targets can be reached only across maritime space, even when one uses aircraft, because of the problems created by authorization to overfly national territory. An action by sea enables us to start out from any land support base toward the neighboring territory of the party one wishes to act upon.

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If it is possible, it would be preferable thus and this is quite often the supplementary means that supports another form of intervention which is faster.

James Cable foresees an evolution rather than the disappearance of what has been called gunboat diplomacy. Operations of this kind seem to him to be bound to become more complicated and to demand minute preparation: "The political employment of limited force, applied in the maritime domain, will be less simple, less direct, probably less spectacular than in the old days but it can be more effective. Instead of providing eager young navy officers with a welcome change of pace from monotonous peacetime routine, it could be their normal occupation and it could offer a subject of serious studies for specialists on the political factors involved in future navies."

These actions can be interventions on land but they can also take the form of reprisals or retaliation against interest which a nation has on the sea, such as harassment, diverting merchant vessels, seizing fishing vessels, etc. In case of an encounter between military forces on the sea, in a context of crisis, serious dangers of escalation may appear if, for example, a commanding officer who is too nervous and who was taken by surprise by an ill-advised low-altitude overflight, should open fire. But spectacular gestures can also defuse the atmosphere. In all cases, the commanders must get very strict orders and must have as direct communications links as possible with the highest military authority, if not government authority.

This limited character of the employment of force increases the probability of using maritime forces in a directly political move. A nuclear power may act in a theater where it knows that a confrontation will not turn into anything big. One can also imagine that a nuclear power might undertake purely maritime actions against another power, even a nuclear power, with the latter being able to retaliate only with maritime means, because otherwise it would have to trigger escalation.

Conclusion

The main difficulty encountered by sailors is not to find a mission or a justification for their existence but to pick what should be, for them, the primary mission and to drop other missions which are too secondary and for which the means are lacking. This is all the more important since the navy is constantly being employed in peacetime and since its public service operating expenditures are currently increasing. But these sources are of a political nature. They are all the more difficult since it takes seven or eight years to put in a major weapons system which will remain in service for at least 20 years, with at least one overhaul midway through its effective life. It is difficult to foresee what the missions of the military forces in the political context of the year 2000 could be. However, one can anticipate the capacities that will always be necessary because they correspond to the major constants of the maritime environment.

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Chief among these constants is the fact that the policy of a nation, which considers itself to be a world power, runs through the sea. If we want to make sure that the political power will retain the means for exerting influence or conducting local or regional action, we must avoid letting it become caught in the purely "coastal" role of navies that are not just second-rate but even third-rate. But it is not up to the navy to decide that and responsibility rests with the highest echelons of government. We can only recall the importance of indirect strategies where maritime space plays the primary role; this importance is the consequence of the blockage of direct confrontations triggered by nuclear weapons. These indirect strategies are permanent and the navy is committed in peacetime, in a permanent fashion, and within an operational context.

FOOTNOTES

RAdm (second-half) Sevaistre has already published one article entitled "Liddell Hart and the Sea" in the first issue of STRATEGIQUE.

1. As a calvaryman said once upon a time: "You sailors have men to arm your vessels. We have tanks to arm our men."
2. Alfred Thayer Mahan, American admiral and professor at the Naval War College, in 1890 published his first works ("On the Influence of Sea Power on History") which made him the Clausewitz of the sailors. Phillip Howard Colomb ([illegible in photostat--1899) British, admiral, professor at the Royal Naval War College, Greenwich, father of naval map exercises. Sir Julian Corbett, born in 1854, professor of history at Oxford, author of "Principles of Maritime Strategy." Stephen Roskill, captain, Royal Navy, author of the official history of the Royal Navy during World War II and numerous historical works ("Naval Policy Between the Wars," "Churchill and the Admirals").
3. Mackinder: "He who holds the heartland holds the world island and he who holds the world island holds the world."
4. Castex, "Melanges strategiques."
5. See Laurent Lucchini and Michel Voelckel, "Les Etats et la mer, le nationalisme maritime" [State and the Sea--Maritime Nationalism], notes and documentary studies of Documentation Francaise.
6. Pierre Celerier, "Geopolitics and Geostrategy" (PUF, "Que sais-je?" collection) includes the Indian Ocean in the Pacific zone. The Indian Ocean has sufficiently recovered its personality today to be considered by itself.
7. Articles in MORSKOY SBORNIK, published between February 1972 and February 1973, and translations in U.S. NAVAL INSTITUTE PROCEEDINGS, January to November 1974.

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8. See Espagnac du Ravay, "Vingt ans de politique navale" [Twenty Years of Naval Policy], 1941.
9. See Hedley Bull, "Seapower and Political Influences," Adelphi paper Chapter No 122, spring 1976.
10. Laurent Lucchini and Michel Voelckel, op. cit.
11. Castex, "Theories Strategiques" [Strategic Theories], Volume 1.
12. James R. Schlesinger, "Annual Report of the Defense Department for FY1976 and FY1977," Washington, USGPO, 1975.
13. John Selden, "Mare clausum, the right and dominion of the sea," 1635, refutation of "Mare liberum" [Free Sea] of Grotius, published in Holland in 1605.
14. Captain S. E. Moore, RN, "NATO at Sea," magazine "NATO's Fifteen Nations," 1978-1979.
15. Old phrase in tactical documents.
16. James Cable, "Gunboat diplomacy: Political Applications of Limited Naval Forces" (Chatto and Winders, London 1970).
17. This is what happened in Lebanon in 1958; the American forces remained in a standby position south of Cyprus, the [cruiser] "De Grasse" and several French escort vessels were in the same position in the same sector.

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COUNTRY SECTION

ITALY

CRAXI POISED TO PROVOKE GOVERNMENT CRISIS IN JANUARY

LD311613 Turin LA STAMPA in Italian 25 Oct 79 p 2 LD

[Report by Luca Guirato: "Craxi To Open Crisis After Christian Democratic Party (DC) Congress"]

[Excerpt] Rome--Craxi will spark off a government crisis immediately after the DC congress in January. "Today," the socialist leader said yesterday, immediately after his meeting with the DC to discuss institutional reforms, "there is a truce, we are enabling the government to exist through an attitude of responsibility toward the institutions. But it is obvious that, in accordance with political logic, this road will come to an end. There is no cause for anyone to be alarmed. But things are as they are. The DC congress will have to give an answer to the other political forces-- a clear answer on the political problem of the legislature."

Having expressed satisfaction with the DC's specific, and not merely theoretical, willingness to tackle the institutional issue, the Italian Socialist Party [PSI] leader declared that "this legislature started on the wrong foot: it has not resolved the problem of stability and governability. We cannot embark on a legislature with our eyes closed, in the belief that we can make it work by means of expedients. It is, therefore, essential to resolve the political problem without wasting any more time."

Why did Craxi take yesterday's opportunity to clarify some of his party's political objective, though without undue haste?

The PSI's objective is to impart a new thrust to the policy of national solidarity, by involving the communists more explicitly and specifically than the Andreotti government did. Such an involvement could not extend as far as the appointment of PCI ministers, because the DC will not permit it, irrespective of who emerges victorious from the congress. But, apart from the formation of a broad parliamentary majority and the launching of a broad program agreed with the PCI in its every detail, the PSI believes that one of the points of agreement among all the antifascist parties must be precisely the institutional "grand reform."

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This is the slant which the socialists intend to impart to the meetings on the "grand reform," began, after so many uncertainties, by the DC. After meeting with the PCI delegation, Zaccagnini and the other DC leaders met late yesterday evening with the liberals and the communists. Today the talks close with the republicans and social democrats.

Several political problems are emerging, however, and they will be dealt with starting next week at a second round of talks, some connected and some unconnected with the technical institutional meetings. Indeed, not all the parties agree with the slant which the socialists attach to the reform.

Within the DC it is no mystery that Zaccagnini agrees with Craxi on greater involvement of the PCI, "introduced" into a reintroduction of the national solidarity policy. This decision, however, cannot be implemented solely because the secretary likes it. It will have to be approved (or turned down) by the congress, with a view to which a series of meetings of currents and lunches attended by party leaders are under way, confirming, among the many nervous rumors, just one certainty: all possibilities are open and nothing has yet been decided. So, for the time being, the DC prefers to set its sights on the technical and institutional aspects of the reform, which are important and in which discussions are already well under way--at least according to the protagonists of yesterday's meetings.

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COUNTRY SECTION

ITALY

BARBIERI COMMENTS ON PONOMAREV'S 'BURIAL' OF EUROCOMMUNISM

LD301441 Turin LA STAMPA in Italian 19 Oct 79 pp 1-2 LD

[Commentary by Frane Barbieri: "Requiem for a Heresy?"]

[Text] The peremptory choice presented to Europe by Moscow does not only concern the governments but also involves the communist parties. In Berlin Brezhnev urged the governments to separate from Washington. In Moscow Suslov and Ponomarev, on the other hand, are urging the leaders of the fraternal parties to rejoin the ranks after their rash Eurocommunist sallies. Their tone is harsh, reminiscent almost of the Comintern.

The high priest of orthodoxy, Suslov, has even revived "monolithism" as a dominant and permanent characteristic of the communist philosophy varying interpretations of Marxism and challenges to the Soviet philosophy of "real socialism" are nothing but splitting subversions. Then chief of the CPSU's intercommunist affairs Ponomarev summed up the practical application of these principles. The most important result, announced with complacent paternalism, is the intended elimination of the evil deviation called Eurocommunism.

Rather than condemning it, Ponomarev in fact decrees its end, explaining that this has taken place over the past 18 months. He also lists the factors and circumstances which allegedly caused the death of "so-called Eurocommunism." This was the first time the word has been mentioned by a top Kremlin leader--obviously, in inverted commas, as if to say that it never existed and has now disappeared. This is his list: "The CPSU's flexible but steadfast stand in defense of principles," the pressure of "the class situation and struggle in the capitalist countries" and the resistance of the "activists" within the parties themselves. (Note that in Ponomarev's syllogism the Soviet party emerges as the one which best reflects the feelings of the Western communist grassroots.)

All this together, then, allegedly made the leaders of those parties "realize that Eurocommunism damages the international communist movement and the parties themselves." There is just one difference from the Comintern: in a generous spirit, the Kremlin leader implies that the

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deviationist error will be forgotten--promising, moreover, that "the CPSU Central Committee will continue in every way to help the communist parties overcome possible future deviations from Marxism-Leninism and from proletarian internationalism."

Ponomarev thus proclaims Eurocommunism finished, as far as communists are concerned, and leaves its corpse to Brzezinski, who basically invented it. This demise was ideologically ratified a few days after Berlinguer and Carrillo diagnosed in Madrid the deceased's "good taste of health" and Pajetta described it as "more alive and thriving than ever." It cannot have died in just 10 days.

There are two possibilities. In the first hypothesis, the Soviet ideologist's observation, all the more authoritative insofar as it was made at the all-Soviet conference of "ideological workers," proceeds from a clarification which has taken place between the CPSU and the Eurocommunist leaders themselves. The last to speak at length with Brezhnev was Berlinguer. Reading between the lines of the statements, one could find a number of indications supporting the supposition that the Eurocommunist wing's return to the monolithic ranks took place by common agreement. The very communique on the unexpected meeting reflects, both in its tone and in its content, a hitherto unprecedented degree of agreement--unprecedented at least between Berlinguer and the Soviets.

This was followed by the decidedly positive verdicts, without the usual reservations, issued by Berlinguer and Pajetta on the intrinsic socialist nature of socialist society. Last, in the formulations made by the PCI leader during his visit to Spain, the very concept of Eurocommunism overflowed into a kind of pancommunist ecumenism--the "new internationalism." By distorting the characteristics of these meetings, the Soviets were able to reach the ideological conclusion that most concerned them in the current trial of strength with the West. That is, the nonexistence of a special Western form of communism.

The second possibility is that Suslov's and Ponomarev's sallies could stem from a Kremlin plan to impose a radical option on the European communist parties. If a crisis-ridden Europe made Brezhnev realize the possibility of detaching it from the United States, the crisis-ridden communist parties within the framework of a crisis-ridden Europe have inspired the idea of reassociating parties' credibility and acceptability within the context of the government dialectic seems much lower insofar as the other European political forces see a domestic compromise with the communists and a foreign compromise with the USSR as the only road to possible salvation.

As far as Moscow is concerned, the Eurocommunist error was acceptable as long as it helped to destabilize Europe and detach it from America. But as soon as it considers both the destabilization and the detachment complete, the Kremlin has no interest in seeing Europe consolidated on autonomous bases. A Europeanism inspired by Western traditions and proceeding along a "third path," though detached from the United States, does not suit the Moscow

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strategists. They are even less able to accept it in its leftwing variant, which follows a middle line between Lenin and Kautsky. It is better to be faced with a disorganized capitalism than with a strong and efficient socialism fused with democracy.

[LD301443] Indeed, according to Ponomarev, "the most dangerous aspect of so-called Eurocommunism was the opposition to real socialism of a specific model of socialism conceived under the direct influence of social democracy and bourgeois concepts."

Perhaps Moscow regards it as indispensable to deprive Europe of its ideological missiles also, having calculated the long-term impact that a socialist third way would have in Eastern-Bloc countries. Therefore, it has decided to present Eurocommunism, the potential propellant charge for such an ideological missile, with a peremptory choice of camp. The right answer might lie between these two possibilities being a combination of the ones already mentioned: a compromise surrender on the Eurocommunists' part, which the Soviets, by force of will and ideology, are trying to bring to its logical outcome.

Be that as it may, a clarification should not be long in coming. It will emerge from the reactions of the Eurocommunist parties themselves, which are now called on to contradict or support Ponomarev's announcement on the absorption of their irresponsible and impulsive actions.

To bring about a retraction of the Eurocommunists' reactions and explanations, it will certainly take more than the unprecedented retraction made by TASS, which omitted all remarks concerning Eurocommunism from its revised version of Ponomarev's original speech published 24 hours later. Moscow's verdict stands. A retraction would require the explosion of Ponomarev, who wanted to explode Berlinguer.

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COUNTRY SECTION

ITALY

BREZHNEV SEIZES INITIATIVE FOR MONOLITHIC EAST BLOC

LD011741 Turin LA STAMPA in Italian 27 Oct 79 pp 1-2 LD

[Article by Frane Barbieri: "Unbalanced Balance"]

[Text] Politicians who have had the chance to meet with him recently assert that Brezhnev is now unable to work for more than 2 hours a day. This means that 2 hours can suffice to govern the destiny of an empire. At least at the right moments. And Moscow is undoubtedly experiencing one now. The offer-cum-blackmail threat over the missiles issued by Brezhnev has confused the West, particularly Europe, by confronting it with alternatives both promising and disturbing. Giscard and Schmidt--more sensitive to the promise--and Carter and Thatcher--more inclined to identify a blackmail threat in it--have all lost sleep out of fear of making a mistake. They are exchanging messages and warnings in search of an answer which is neither a capitulation to the threat nor a missed opportunity to accept the promise.

Brezhnev, whether seriously ill or merely exhausted, has plenty of time to recover. Having issued his challenge and embarrassed his adversaries, he can sit back and await the reply. Having defeated Carter over the human rights campaign, over SALT, over economic blockade, over the neutron bomb, over China's role and over the Soviet presence in Cuba, he has now gone as far as to challenge his European support. Indeed, there is more concern in Europe over Brezhnev's eventual demise than over Carter's possible failure to be reelected. This would suffice to make Brezhnev's power survive beyond the limits of his physical strength.

While the West fears a worse solution in the Kremlin leadership, not even the Soviets can find any reason to seek a better one. Brezhnev's charisma, as a figure symbolizing Soviet power, has never been so deep rooted. Brezhnev emerged as a compromise figure and subsequently asserted himself over 15 years, first as a mediator among the various groups of the vast government. Perhaps never before his recent Berlin speech have the various tendencies in Soviet politics all identified with his stance. Though ambiguous as far as the West was concerned, his proposal had a multifaceted effect on the domestic plane: it united all at once the army hard-liners, the party orthodox and the more openminded technocrats.

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The Soviet marshals, who have become strategists of the chess game in which the winner is the one who places his missiles most skilfully on the chessboard, view detente just as Brezhnev portrayed it. That is, based on a Soviet advantage in the global deployment of nuclear potential. There is no doubt that such an advantage exists: to offer, as the Soviet leader did, not to target medium-range SS-20 missiles on countries which abandon the deployment of similar U.S. missiles also implies acknowledging that the side making the offer already has the very weapons--and has them well targeted--which the others, who do not, should renounce.

A somewhat imbalanced balance, therefore, which would leave the Soviet marshals sufficient superiority to dominate the chessboard, to avoid misunderstandings. Ustinov's men have every reason to accept Brezhnev's proposal to halt the arms race at this very moment in time.

Brezhnev finds equal consent from the liberals, the great economic visionaries. They have fought for years in an attempt to wrest a larger slice from strategic spending for real production investments. The liberals expect one reformist change in particular as a result of the present ceiling set on military spending: the demolition of the dividing wall between the two watertight compartments of the economy, whereby the strategic side took everything it needed, leaving the meager remainder for the purely economic side. The economists hope that they can at last be economists and not the lackeys of the party and Red Army strategists.

A strategic stalemate would extricate the USSR from technological autarchy, bringing it closer to Western industrial standards. By discovering in the Eastern Bloc markets and Siberian sources a way out of its own crisis, by selling its own technological plant in exchange, the European economy would eventually become more conditioned by the Soviet economy than it could itself condition the Soviet economy.

This must be why even the priests of orthodoxy are backing Brezhnev's initiative. After a long silence Suslov himself, the Kremlin's ideological conscience, delivered a speech, described as global. In his opinion, this moment in history is a decisive one for the socialist camp's victory. It is enough to confront a declining capitalist world with a "more and more monolithic community of socialist countries." This time Suslov mounted the platform not to censure Brezhnev's pragmatism but to put the finishing touches to his line. The secretary general concentrated on the rifts in the Western alliance and the ideologist took the opportunity to insist on the consolidation of the eastern alliance, reviving two ideas buried in Berlin 3 years ago at the pancommunist conference: proletarian internationalism and monolithism.

[LD011743] The allies, rallied round the Soviet leader on the Karl-Marx-Alee platform, while the missiles filed past, could not fail to be absorbed by Brezhnev's initiative. Significantly, a few days later PRAVDA's front page--filed with the CPSU's 70 slogans--among the slogans which always seem the same, though they change every year, no longer mentioned the socialist

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countries one by one to send "solidarity greetings to their parties and peoples." This time a salute was addressed to "the unity and monolithism of the fraternal parties and peoples of the countries of the world socialist community." This implied an entirely united multinational group of 10 countries, fused and confused, whose "politburo," excepting Ceaulescu, met in Berlin to strengthen the impact of Brezhnev's challenge.

As if by some paradox, the CPSU leader's prestige is reaching its highest point at the very moment when his physical strength is about to disappear. He has managed to unite in a single initiative all the members of his vast empire, while the West has never been so confused in establishing its strategy. Brezhnev is driving his proposals into the fissures in the West and aiming at a split between Europe and America, strengthened by the fact that a not inconsiderable number of Western politicians see the Eastern direction as the quickest way out of the present crisis. Nevertheless, while noting that Brezhnev is making his move from a position of strength or, if we prefer, from a moment of weakness in the West, it is not contradictory to assert that he is also doing so under pressure from his own weakness.

In the Soviet economy the production side can no longer sustain its unproductivity, just as the USSR itself can no longer manage to subsidize its allies. While West Europe sees itself forced to seek an outlet in the Eastern Bloc, the USSR can also find the scope it needs only in the West. Brezhnev is pressing ahead at great speed because he believes that Europe has few options left open to it, but also because he himself is short of alternatives. Time is short for the economy, which is close to collapse, as it is for the symbolic leader, who is stretched to his physical limits. By pressing ahead too fast, however, Brezhnev risks jeopardizing his own plans. The West can never be "monolithic," but faced with excessive pressure it could--not to say should--resort to a joint alinement unhinged a long time ago.

Brezhnev's mistake could prove to be an excessively strong belief in his own arguments, in the certainty that others will be forced to accept them. He might, however, see his plans collapse, if the West adopted the same arguments once used by the USSR. When the progressive nuclear scientists moved from the West to Moscow they justified themselves with the belief that only a nuclear balance could guarantee peace. Pontecorvo [allusion unknown] confirmed this just a few days ago. Now the argument could be reversed to the West's advantage--if Europe, weak and faced with a driving and impatient Brezhnev, finds a way and the time to use it.

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COUNTRY SECTION

MALTA

INTERVIEW WITH PREMIER MINTOFF ON FOREIGN POLICY

LD311517 Milan CORRIERE DELLA SERA in Italian 18 Oct 79 p 3 LD

[Interview with Maltese Prime Minister Dom Mintoff in La Valetta by Roberto Gervasio: "We Are the World's Least Alined Country"--date not given]

[Excerpts] La Valletta--[Question] Why are you so much at odds with NATO?

[Answer] Because NATO, officially until 1964 and in fact until 1971, regarded us as a colony and deprived us of our political freedom.

[Question] But did not your predecessor seek NATO membership?

[Answer] Yes and the alliance refused, even denying him observer status. But when we asked NATO to leave, it left.

[Question] Why are you so critical of the Common Market?

[Answer] Me, critical of the Common Market? Are you joking? Let us not confuse NATO and the EC and do not pass me off as anti-European.

[Question] Please answer.

[Answer] We are part of Europe and part of Africa, loyal to both. This does not alter the fact that Common Market member countries have no political soul.

[Question] Which you have.

[Answer] Which we, who are poorer and weaker, have.

[Question] So what?

[Answer] So you Europeans, in your own interests and in the interests of peace and freedom, should be more independent of the United States, just as the East European countries should be less dominated by the Soviet Union.

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[Question] Which country scares you most?

[Answer] Where?

[Question] Anywhere in the world.

[Answer] None.

[Question] Which constitutes the greatest threat to peace?

[Answer] It is not a country, but a basin.

[Question] The Mediterranean?

[Answer] Precisely. With the shortage of oil no area is now more explosive. Take Iran. You see what confusion there has been since it ceased production? And apart from Iran, there is Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Libya, Algeria and so forth.

[Question] What is to be done?

[Answer] The Palestinians must be given a state, a nation.

[Question] How?

[Answer] If the Americans trusted the Arab countries more, became their friends and stopped over-asserting their military supremacy to guarantee oil supplies by the fear this inspires, then everything would resolve itself.

[Question] In other words, you believe that if Washington supported Israel a little less and the Palestinians a little more, the Middle East would not be the powder keg that it is.

[Answer] Precisely.

[Question] How are relations between Malta and Washington?

[Answer] There are none--either with Washington or with Moscow. At present we are the world's least aligned country. For the first time in our history we are enjoying freedom. More freedom than you Italians enjoy.

[Question] Is Al-Qadhdhafi really your best ally?

[Answer] We love and get along with all the Arab states.

[Question] I know that, but with Al-Qadhdhafi your idyll is particular tender.

[Answer] Libya is nearest to us. We had it at our side during the struggle against NATO and then against Britain.

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[Question] Over the base?

[Answer] Over the base. You do not forget some things.

[Question] How is your economy faring?

[Answer] Do you want to know whether we are self-sufficient?

[Question] Are you?

[Answer] Yes and no. Yes, insofar as we are not asking anyone to come back and exploit us as a base....

[Question] And no?

[Answer] Insofar as without foreign economic backing we will have to make many sacrifices over the next 5 years. Of course we would rather avoid these.

[Question] What is Malta's strategic importance?

[Answer] Do you know what value was set on the island 6 months ago?

[Question] No.

[Answer] \$80 million.

[Question] By whom?

[Answer] By NATO and Britain.

[Question] And now?

[Answer] The price has increased.

[Question] In your opinion can NATO do without Malta as a military base?

[Answer] If you ask NATO, the answer will be "yes."

[Question] What if I ask you?

[Answer] I will tell you that NATO would still like to be here.

[Question] Has the Soviet Union never made any advances?

[Answer] What kind of advances?

[Question] Has it never asked whether it could establish a base?

[Answer] It does not even have an embassy.

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[Question] How do you mean it does not have an embassy?

[Answer] It will have one when it increases trade with us.

[Question] Has it applied for one?

[Answer] Yes.

[Question] So there are no Russians on the island?

[Answer] Not as far as I know.

[Question] What about Americans?

[Answer] Oh, yes, ever since before I became prime minister.

[Question] What about Chinese?

[Answer] There are some Chinese too.

[Question] What are they doing here?

[Answer] They are completing one major dockyard and repairing another.

[Question] So relations with Beijing are excellent.

[Answer] We were invited to China immediately after Nixon.

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END